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Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 INR-10 NSCE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 0190
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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DELIVER OPENING OF BUSINESS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR KS YO KN US
SUBJ: PRESS REPORTS TITO INITIATIVE ON TRIPARTITE TALKS

REF: STATE 081722

1. KOREAN PRESS MORNING OF MARCH 30 CARRIES REPORT FROM JAPANESE PRESS (MAINICHI) ON INITIATIVE BY TITO FOR TRIPARTITE TALKS INVOLVING U.S., NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA. ATTRIBUTED TO "EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES IN JAPAN" THE STORY CLAIMS THAT TITO HAD TOLD PRESIDENT CARTER HE WAS WILLING TO ACT AS INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN U.S. AND NORTH KOREA TO ACHIEVE SETTLEMENT IN KOREAN PENINSULA ON GERMAN PATTERN. TITO HAD REPORTEDLY UNDERTAKEN TO PERSUADE PYONGYANG TO AGREE, AND HAD ALLEGEDLY OUTLINED THE POSITION TO NORTH KOREAN VICE FOREIGN MINISTER YI CHONG-MOK DURING THE LATTER'S RECENT VISIT TO BELGRADE. STORY ADDES THAT TITO HAD TRANSMITTED KIM IL-SONG'S INTEREST IN A DIALOGUE WITH THE U.S. BUT THAT CARTER HAD RE-EMPHASIZED U.S. REFUSAL TO UNDERTAKE CONTACT WITH NK IN ABSENCE OF ROK. TITO HAD ACCEPTED THE U.S. POSITION AND COUNTERED WITH THE PROPOSAL FOR TRIPARTITE TALKS "WHICH CARTER
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BASICALLY UNDERSTOOD" (IN SENSE IMPLYING AGREEMENT). MAINICHI REPORTEDLY ADDS THAT THE DESIRE FOR YUGOSLAVIA TO PLAY AN INTERMEDIARY ROLE HAD BEEN "CONFIRMED BY OTHER DIPLOMATIC SOURCES IN JAPAN".

2. AFTERNOON PAPERS REPORT COMMENTS OF UNIDENTIFIED FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES ON ABOVE STORY. ONE "RESPONSIBLE"

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OFFICIAL IS QUOTED SAYING THAT U.S. HAD INFORMED ROKG OF TITO PROPOSAL, THAT MOFA FELT IT MUST FIRST EXAMINE THE INTENT OF A TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE, AND NOTED THAT TITO HAD VISITED PYONGYANG LAST YEAR BEFORE GOING TO WASHINGTON AND THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE THE NORTH KOREANS WERE TRYING TO USE HIS VISIT FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES. THE OFFICIAL FURTHER NOTED THAT THE TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE IDEA GOES COUNTER TO THE ROKG POSITION, WHICH HAS BEEN TO SEEK A FOUR-POWER CONFERENCE AND RESUMPTION OF DIRECT DIALOGUE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA. (TONGA ILBO ADDS THAT OFFICIAL CALLED PROPOSAL UNACCEPTABLE TO ROKG.) HE ADDED THAT SETTLEMENT OF ISSUES ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA REQUIRE RESUMPTION OF DIRECT DIALOGUE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND THAT A FOUR-POWER CONFERENCE, INCLUDING THE PRC, IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE REASSURANCE FOR THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT.

3. ANOTHER OFFICIAL IS QUOTED IN SAME STORY AS SAYING THAT ROK MUST FIRST EXAMINE WHETHER THERE IS A CONNEC-TION BETWEEN THE NORTH KOREAN POSITION, REJECTING THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE AND THE FOUR-POWER CONFERENCE, AND TITO'S TRIPARTITE PROPOSAL, ADDING THAT IF TITO'S PROPOSAL IS PART OF A NORTH KOREAN SCHEME TO ISOLATE THE ROK, IT IS WORTHLESS. OTHER PAPERS CARRY SIMILAR COMMENTS, INDICATING ROKG EXAMINING PROPOSAL IN THIS SUSPICIOUS LIGHT. HOWEVER, ONLY TONGA REPORTS
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DESCRIPTION OF IT AS "UNACCEPTABLE".
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